

Working with recycled water

A guide for property developers and builders

Billions of litres of water are recycled in Sydney and the Illawarra each year. By 2015, we'll be recycling about 70 billion litres of water a year – that's up to 12% of Sydney's water needs.

Recycled water is available at some construction sites, many of them in north-western Sydney. Recycled water will soon become available in other areas in Sydney's south-west.

This fact sheet explains a few simple safeguards you need to follow if you are working with recycled water.

What is recycled water?

Recycled water is water that has been used before in bathrooms, laundries, kitchens and businesses.

Sydney Water cleans and purifies it so it is safe to use again.

Water quality

Sydney Water provides high quality recycled water that is safe for its intended use. The recycled water we supply is not for drinking.

Sydney Water produces recycled water to meet the relevant national water quality standards and NSW Health requirements.

Recycled water looks and smells like drinking water but usually has a slightly higher chlorine and salt content.

It's highly unlikely that you'll become ill if you accidentally drink recycled water.



How to tell if recycled water is supplied to a site

Recycled water is supplied through pipes that are completely separate from the drinking water supply. These pipes are labelled and identified by a purple colour or purple plastic sleeving.

Each property supplied with recycled water is provided with a pre-laid service from the recycled water main into the property, terminating at a connection point at the meter.

The property will also have a second water meter that is purple. At least one of the garden taps will be purple and will have a removable handle. Where a recycled water tap is installed for garden use, it must be marked with a warning sign. For example:

‘Warning - recycled water – do not drink’.

Some industrial sites may have different plumbing arrangements for their recycled water supply.

For example, BlueScope Steel’s Port Kembla site uses different colour coding for their recycled water pipes and fittings.

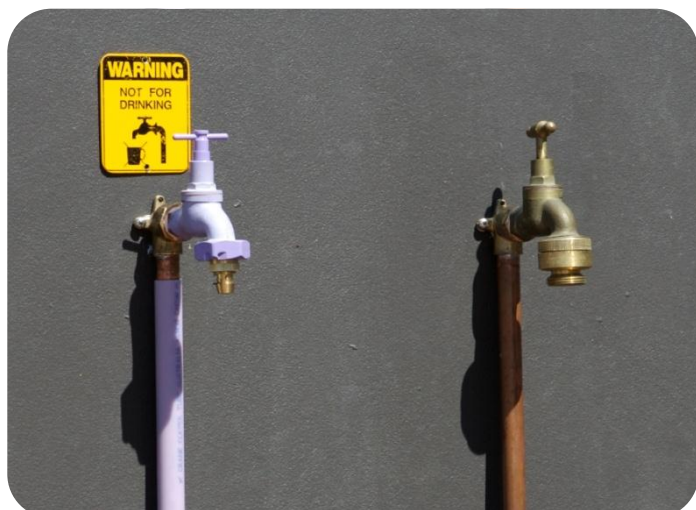
On-site safeguards will be explained during site inductions.

Plumbing standards and requirements

Plumbing work in recycled water areas must be carried out by a licensed plumber and installations must comply with plumbing regulations. Recycled water taps, outlets, valves and fittings must be clearly marked with safety signs.

Alterations, extensions and new recycled water plumbing must be inspected by NSW Fair Trading, to check for any cross connections of the drinking water and recycled water supply.

For more information, visit [NSW Fair Trading](#).



Recycled water pipes and fittings are usually coloured purple to distinguish them from the drinking water system

Uses

The recycled water supplied by Sydney Water is not for drinking, washing hands or filling swimming pools.

On building sites, recycled water may be used for:

- dust suppression
- washing trucks and plant equipment
- watering gardens
- flushing toilets
- filling ornamental ponds.

Recycled water is also used in industry and for fighting fires, for irrigating parks and sports fields including many golf courses, in agriculture and for river health.

Working safely

- If recycled water is supplied to your building site, make sure everyone on your team knows.
- Ensure that workers know not to drink recycled water or wash their hands with it.
- Safety signs must be installed on outlets that use recycled water. The signs must state that the water is recycled and is not for drinking.
- If you come into contact with recycled water, wash with soap and rinse with drinking water.



BlueScope Steel uses recycled water in cooling towers and for generating steam

Where you'll find recycled water in Sydney and the Illawarra

Sydney Water has 14 water recycling plants and runs many recycled water schemes. There are also a growing number of privately operated projects. Tradespeople are most likely to encounter residential schemes.

The biggest is the Rouse Hill Recycled Water Scheme in Sydney's north-west. It supplies recycled water to more than 21,000 homes and businesses in these suburbs:

- Acacia Gardens
- Beaumont Hills
- Castle Hill
- Glenwood
- Kellyville
- Kellyville Ridge
- Parklea
- Quakers Hill
- Rouse Hill
- Stanhope Gardens
- The Ponds

The Sydney Olympic Park Authority's (SOPA's) Water Reclamation and Management Scheme was built for the Sydney 2000 Olympics. It now serves thousands of homes at Newington and commercial properties in the Olympic Park. As this scheme has different approved recycled water uses, please visit the SOPA website, www.sopa.nsw.gov.au, for more information.

The Hoxton Park Recycled Water Scheme in south-western Sydney will start to operate in late 2012 and will serve about 13,000 homes, as well as industrial areas.

BlueScope Steel's water recycling scheme at Port Kembla is one of Australia's largest. Another major industrial and irrigation scheme, built and run by the private sector, began operating in the Rosehill and Smithfield areas in October 2011.

The number of water recycling projects is constantly growing. For an up to date list, visit www.waterforlife.nsw.gov.au/recycling

Responsibilities

Sydney Water supplies recycled water to agreed standards and maintains recycled water pipes in the street to the water meter, or up to one meter inside the property boundary.

NSW Fair Trading is responsible for plumbing regulations and inspection of plumbing installations within a property.

Customers and users of recycled water are responsible for using it as advised by Sydney Water.



Recycled water is supplied through a pipeline that is separate to the drinking water pipe



Recycled water helps to keep sports fields in good condition



Recycled water can be used for firefighting

To know more

Sydney Water

Phone: 13 20 92

Email: recycledwater@sydneywater.com.au

Visit: sydneywater.com.au under 'Water4Life/Recycling'

NSW Fair Trading

Phone: 13 32 20

Visit: www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au